

In the Claims:

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28. (New) A switching apparatus for a contact center having:

a local area network;

a public network; and

a first switching apparatus being configured to connect to said public network and being configured to communicate over said local area network with a second switching apparatus wherein the first switching apparatus has a trunk interface for communicating to the public network with a number of trunk channels equal to T; an agent station interface with a number of channels to couple to agent stations equal to S; a processing resources interface with a number of channels to couple to processing resources equal to R; and a switching device interface with a number of channels to couple to the second switching device equal to B, the improvement comprising said first switching apparatus having a number of channels reserved to couple to said second switching device, wherein B (number of switching device channels) is greater than or equal to T (number of trunk channels) plus S (number of agent station channels).

29. (New) The contact center of claim 28 wherein public network interface includes Public Switch Telephone Network (PSTN).

30. (New) The contact center of claim 28 wherein public network interface includes internet telephony.

31. (New) The contact center of claim 28 wherein processing resources interface includes conference, recording, and playback resources.

32. (New) The contact center of claim 28 wherein said first switching apparatus includes time division multiplexing for providing interface channels.

33. (New) The contact center of claim 32 wherein a number of channels provided allows said contact center to be linearly expandable and the switching channels in the second switching apparatus are all utilized for call switching rather than interfacing with other switching apparatus.

34. (New) The contact center of claim 32 wherein a number of channels provided equals  $B$  (number of switching device channels) plus  $T$  (number of trunk channels) plus  $S$  (number of agent station channels) plus  $R$  (number of processing resources channels).

35. (New) The contact center of claim 32 wherein  $B$  (number of switching device channels),  $T$  (number of trunk channels),  $S$  (number of agent station channels), and  $R$  (number of processing resources channels) are set based on the number of interface channels provided such that said contact center to be linearly expandable and the switching channels in the second switching apparatus are all utilized for call switching rather than interfacing with other switching apparatus.

36. (new) The contact center of claim 28 wherein the agent station channels are connected to said first switching apparatuses through a legacy PBX.

37. (New) The contact center of claim 28 wherein contact center

further comprises a backup switching apparatus and a means for detecting when said first switching apparatus is faulty and activating said backup switching apparatus for service.

38. (New) The contact center of claim 28 wherein contact center further comprises a backup switching apparatus and a means for detecting when one of said first switching apparatus and said second switching apparatus is faulty and activating said backup switching apparatus for service, said backup apparatus being configured to service one of said first switching apparatus and said second switching apparatus which is detected as failing.